1	Stacey M. Leyton (SBN 203827)				
2	Barbara J. Chisholm (SBN 224656)				
2	Danielle Leonard (SBN 218201)				
3	ALTSHULER BERZON LLP				
	177 Post Street, Suite 300				
4	San Francisco, CA 94108				
5	Tel. (415) 421-7151				
5	Fax (415) 362-8064				
6	sleyton@altber.com dleonard@altber.com				
	bchisholm@altber.com				
7	bemshorm wattoer.com				
8	Elena Goldstein (pro hac vice)				
0	Skye Perryman (pro hac vice)				
9	DEMOCRACY FORWARD FOUNDATION				
	P.O. Box 34553				
10	Washington, DC 20043				
1.1	Tel: (202) 448-9090				
11	Fax: (202) 796-4426				
12	egoldstein@democracyforward.org				
12	sperryman@democracyforward.org				
13					
1.4	Attorneys for Plaintiffs				
14					
15	[Additional Counsel not listed]				
	LINITED STATES I	OISTRICT COURT			
16	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT				
17	FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA				
1 /	SAN FRANCISCO DIVISION				
18	SAN FRANCIS	CO DIVISION			
10	AMERICAN FEDERATION OF	Case No. 3:25-cv-03698-SI			
19	GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO, et	Case 110. 5.25-cv-05098-51			
20	al.,	DECLARATION OF SYLVIA NORMAN			
	u.,				
21	Plaintiffs,				
22					
	V.				
23					
2.4	DONALD J. TRUMP, in his official capacity				
24	as President of the United States, et al.,				
25	D.f 1				
23	Defendants.				
26					
27					
27					
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Case No: 3:25-cv-03698-SI

DECLARATION OF SYLVIA NORMAN

I, Sylvia Norman, declare as follows:

- 1. lam over 18 years of age and competent to give this declaration. This declaration is based on my personal knowledge, information, and belief.
- 2. I recently retired from being a Claims Representative in the Social Security Administration ("SSA"), West Fresno Field Office #386, where I had worked for 36 years.
- 3. The SSA's mission is to provide financial protection for Americans through retirement, disability, and survivor's benefits. These benefits are administered through a network of approximately 1,230 field offices across the country; these field offices are supported by ten regional offices and six processing centers. SSA's field offices serve over forty million Americans every year.
- 4. Iam the President of the American Federation of Government Employees, Local 3172 ("Local 3172" or the "Union"). I have been a member of the Union for my entire career as a federal employee. I serve as the President of Local 3172 for 19 years and am currently serving a second term as Regional Council 247 Vice President.
 - 5. Local 3172 is affiliated with AFGE National Council 220 ("C220").
- 6. Local 3172 represents a bargaining unit of approximately 1,600 professional and nonprofessional employees at SSA field offices in California and Nevada. These employees include Claims Services Representatives, Claims Specialists, Technical Experts, and other administrative or facilities staff. Field office employees are highly skilled and perform the critical and diverse functions to maintain the country's social insurance and anti-poverty program. Local 3172 employees perform sensitive, technically complex work, often handling matters affecting disabled and aging Americans, widows, and orphans. As of March 26, 2025, approximately 20% of these field office employees in California perform their job duties in multiple languages. Their dedication and experience in these roles ensure that Americans who qualify for Social Security, regardless of background or ability, are protected. Field office employees also perform essential quality control for the entire agency, including post-entitlement corrections, diagnosing and

reporting payment issues, judging benefits claims, investigating fraud allegations (including those ordered by members of Congress), and verifying the immigration status of applicants.

- 7. AFGE Local 3172's bargaining unit employees report to 67 SSA field offices in California, some of those offices are located in fourteen of the fifteen counties in the Northern District of California, including Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Francisco Counties. AFGE Local 3172's bargaining unit employees also report to 1 field office in Nevada.
- 8. AFGE Local 3172 currently has approximately 757 members, with membership being voluntary and available to all bargaining unit employees represented by Local 3172.
- 9. AFGE Local 3172's operations are funded through voluntary dues paid by members.
- 10. AFGE Local 3172's mission is to advocate for the rights, safety, and fair treatment of its bargaining unit employees. As the exclusive bargaining representative of these workers, the Union provides many services to all bargaining unit employees, not just its members. Core functions of the Union include collective bargaining with SSA to obtain a fair and reasonable collective bargaining agreement ("CBA"); filing and negotiating grievances against the SSA to enforce the terms and conditions of the CBA; pursuing arbitrations on behalf of workers to enforce the CBA; and providing other support, guidance, and resources to bargaining unit employees.
- 11. Via an agency-wide email on February 27, 2025, Local 3172 bargaining unit employees were notified that SSA would undertake "massive reorganizations" that could include reduction in force ("RIF") actions. In that email, SSA "offered" four separation options to all employees: Voluntary Early Retirement ("VERA"), Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments ("VSIP"), Optional Retirement, and Resignation. A true and correct copy of the February 27 email is attached hereto as Exhibit A. On March 13, 2025, C220 leadership informed Local 3172 that, according to SSA's Acting Commissioner Leland Dudek, SSA had not yet developed RIF plans, but hoped enough employees would voluntarily retire or separate for the SSA to meet the numerical goal for personnel reduction.
- 12. On March 18, 2025, Acting Commissioner Dudek released the "Social Security Administration 3-Month Action Plan," which sets a goal to voluntarily separate 50,000 SSA

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employees by October 1, 2025. A true and correct copy of the March 18 email is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

- 13. On April 21, 2025, SSA sent another agency-wide email concerning the "Deferred Retirement/Resignation Program – Second Chance (DRP2)." The first deferred resignation program window was open to SSA employees from January 28, 2025, until February 12, 2025. The "DRP2," available to non-mission critical SSA Headquarters employees, is "another opportunity" for SSA employees to voluntarily separate from the Agency. SSA identifies the "key benefits" of the DRP2 as "continued government pay and benefits through September 30, 2025, without any expectation of performing work beyond May 5, 2005 [sic]," and "assurance of exemption from any future agency [RIF]." A true and correct copy of the April 21 email is attached hereto as Exhibit C.
- 14. Local 3172 bargaining unit employees are under tremendous pressure to leave SSA. Many feel coerced or intimidated to opt into the DRP2 or otherwise "voluntarily" separate from the agency.
- 15. This coordinated campaign to pressure employees to separate from the SSA has led to staffing shortages at an already understaffed agency. In the past few months, Multiple Local 3172 bargaining unit employees have suffered strokes and other catastrophic medical events after experiencing this increased strain at their jobs.
- 16. The exodus of Local 3172 bargaining unit employees is affecting Americans' access to SSA services. Wait times for claims appointments have increased, a delay that terminally ill Americans simply cannot afford.
- SSA's "3-Month Action Plan" and its ongoing, concerted effort to push employees 17. to voluntarily separate from the SSA have caused significant fear and concern among Local 3172's members and leadership. In addition to the devastating physical consequences suffered by several members, many more have relocated their lives and families to accept positions with SSA and fear that they will soon be unemployed, without a functioning safety net that they once helped to administer.

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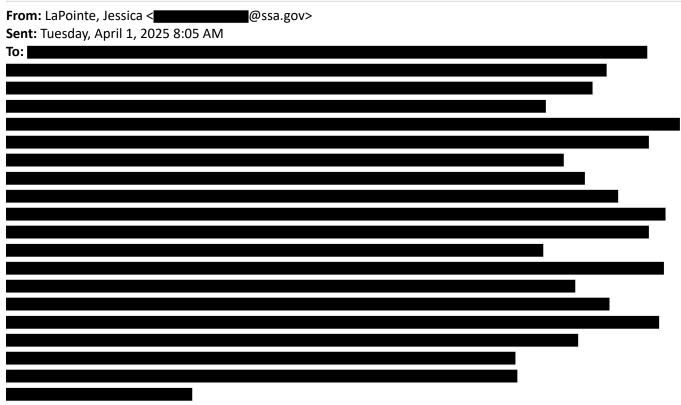
- 18. In response to these developments, Local 3172 has been forced to devote substantial resources to assisting our members and providing guidance about retirement, benefits, separation from federal service, and RIFs. Local 3172 leaders have devoted their time, energy, and resources to this overwhelming demand, diverting critical resources from other Union priorities.
- 19. Local 3172 is preparing for a significant reduction in the size of our unit and the financial and operational harm that reduction will cause.
- 20. The removal of Local 3172 members from federal employment will significantly weaken the Union's bargaining power, as our bargaining strength is directly tied to the number of employees we represent.
- 21. Local 3172 will likely lose hundreds of members if SSA effectuates its "3-Month Action Plan." This loss of their membership dues will have a direct impact on the Union's financial stability and its ability to provide essential services to both members and affiliates.
- 22. The implementation of the "3-Month Action Plan," any RIFs undertaken to accomplish it, will have severe consequences for Local 3172's ability to perform its core functions. Americans will experience lengthy processing times, tantamount to a benefit cut. SSA's technological infrastructure will be at risk. Participation in the Supplemental Security Income program will decrease if field offices close and Americans living in poverty are unable to travel for hearings. The loss of Local 3172 bargaining unit employees will devastate not only the Union's ability to protect safety, fairness, and dignity in the workplace, but the SSA's ability to provide benefits for all Americans—especially the most vulnerable in a timely and efficient manner.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed April 26, 2025, in Fresno, California.

ylvia Norman

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Exhibit A



Subject: FW: FAQs - Availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments to ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES – No Component or Position Exceptions

AFGE C220 affiliates:

For those still getting questions about reassignments. I am resending the resources the agency provided in March.

The biggest one I am getting is related to change on grade and salary here is what the FAQs say:

- 1. If I request a reassignment, would I need to take a change to lower grade?
 - a. Changes to lower grade levels are possible. The agency will assess placement and qualifications after employees interested in voluntarily reassigning have submitted their responses and provide employees with more information and an agreement prior to the position change.
- 2. If I take a voluntary change to lower grade, will my salary be reduced?

The agency will provide grade and pay retention to employees who request a voluntary change to lower grade. Grade retention allows employees to keep their current grade and any within grade increases for up to two years. Afterwards, pay retention would apply. Pay retention works by setting an employee's rate of pay at the step in the new grade level that equals or exceeds their current rate. Employees with a rate of pay that exceeds the step 10 of the new grade level would retain their rate of pay so long as it does not exceed 150% of the step 10 rate. Retained rates above the step 10 receive 50% of any adjustment to overall pay rates until the step 10 rate overtakes them.

Jessica

From: ^Human Resources Internal Communications <

@ssa.gov>

Sent: Monday, March 3, 2025 4:14 PM

Subject: FAQs - Availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments

to ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES – No Component or Position Exceptions

To: All SSA Employees

Subject: FAQs - Availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments to ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES – No Component or Position Exceptions

Last week, we shared the following information about the availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments. To further assist you in making informed decisions, we are providing the attached FAQs addressing common questions. Additionally, we are sharing the attachment: *Difference between Resignations and Retirements* that was inadvertently left off the initial HRIC. We encourage you to carefully review these materials. If you have additional questions, please refer to the <u>Obtaining Further</u> Information section of the initial HRIC.

From: ^Human Resources Internal Communications <

@ssa.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2025 5:10 PM

Subject: Organizational Restructuring - Availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments to ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES – No Component or Position Exceptions

To: All SSA Employees

Subject: Organizational Restructuring - Availability of Voluntary Reassignment, Early Out Retirement, and Separation Incentive Payments to ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES – No Component or Position Exceptions

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE NOTICE

<u>Supervisors will ensure all employees under their supervision (including those on extended leave) receive this information.</u>

The Social Security Administration (SSA) will soon implement agency-wide organizational restructuring that will include significant workforce reductions. Through these massive reorganizations, offices that perform functions not mandated by statute may be prioritized for reduction-in-force actions that could include abolishment of organizations and positions, directed reassignments, and reductions in staffing. The agency may reassign employees from non-mission critical positions to mission critical direct service positions (e.g., field offices, teleservice centers, processing centers). Reassignments may be involuntary and may require retraining for new workloads.

VOLUNTARY REASSIGNMENTS

Employees interested in voluntarily being reassigned to a mission critical position should indicate their interest here Reassignment Questionnaire by March 14, 2025.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVES

Employees who do not wish to undergo the restructuring process may elect to separate from federal service through retirement or resignation. To further support employees considering these options, SSA is offering the following to **ALL EMPLOYEES**:

VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT (VERA) OR "EARLY OUT"

- **Availability**: VERA is now available to employees in all components and positions, with no exclusions. Please eligibility criteria below.
- Separation Window: VERA is available from March 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Employees not eligible now or who wish to retire later in the year under early out may do so, but may be subject to restructuring activities. Employees who are not yet eligible for voluntary early retirement, but who would like to apply later in the calendar year should alert management of their intent to do so and work with their servicing benefits specialists to process their cases as their dates become due. All eligible employees taking early retirement must separate by December 31, 2025.
- Eligibility: To be eligible for early out, employees must:
 - Have 20 years of creditable service and be at least 50 years of age or have at least 25 years of creditable service at any age (this must include 5 years of civilian service).
 - Must be serving under a non-time-limited appointment
 - Have been continuously on SSA's rolls at least 30 days prior to January 17, 2025
 - Cannot be in receipt of an involuntary separation decision for misconduct or unsatisfactory performance.
- **Note:** Retirement may affect your Federal Health Insurance eligibility. Please contact your Servicing Personnel Office (SPO) with questions.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS (VSIP)

- Availability: VSIP will be available until noon EST on March 14 to all employees
 electing to separate from service across all components and positions
 agencywide. VSIP is limited and available on a first come basis. VSIP may be paid
 for an optional retirement (full retirement age), voluntary early retirement (VERA), or
 resignation. VSIP is not available to employees who are participating in the Deferred
 Resignation Program.
- Eligibility:
 - o Employees must:
 - Be serving in an appointment without time limit;
 - Be currently employed by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government for a continuous period of at least 3 years;
 - Be serving in a position covered by an agency VSIP plan (all SSA employees are covered in the agency plan);

- Apply for and receive approval for a VSIP from the agency making the VSIP offer; and
- Not be included in any of the ineligibility categories listed below.
- o Employees in the following categories are not eligible for a VSIP:
 - Reemployed annuitants:
 - Have a disability such that the individual is or would be eligible for disability retirement;
 - Have received a decision notice of involuntary separation for misconduct or poor performance;
 - Previously received any VSIP from the Federal Government;
 - During the 36-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a student loan repayment benefit was paid, or is to be paid;
 - During the 24-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a recruitment or relocation incentive was paid, or is to be paid; and
 - During the 12-month period preceding the date of separation, performed service for which a retention incentive was paid, or is to be paid.
- **Separation Window:** Employees must opt in by March 14 and separate from the agency no later than April 19, 2025. **Employees may be placed on administrative leave through April 19, 2025.**
- How to Sign Up: Employees must complete the <u>VSIP Sign Up</u> as soon as possible, but no later than March 14, 2025 noon EST. Please let your manager know immediately if you sign up for VSIP.
 - o **Note:** Completing the form does not guarantee VSIP.
- Incentive Payment: Payments will be the following amounts for the grade level of your permanent position. All payments are subject to taxes and normal deductions from income. Employees are strongly encouraged to read the <u>rules for VSIP</u> <u>payments</u>.

Up to GS 8	\$15,000
GS 9 – 12	\$20,000
GS 13 and up	\$25,000

OPTIONAL RETIREMENT

Employees who have reached their full retirement age may apply for optional retirement at any time. Employees serving under the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) should see the <u>OPM eligibility information</u> for FERS, which is generally 30 years of service, plus reaching minimum retirement age. Employees serving under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) should refer to the <u>OPM eligibility information for CSRS</u>, which is generally 30 years of service and age 55. Additional provisions and options are available for both FERS and CSRS.

RESIGNATION

Employees may resign from federal service at any time. Employees who resign would be eligible for a payout of their annual leave and may be eligible to apply for a Deferred Retirement when they reach their minimum retirement age. Please see the attached table explaining the differences between resignations and retirements and the benefits that would apply.

OBTAINING FURTHER INFORMATION

General retirement information is available on the <u>Benefits Portal</u>. The Benefits Portal also includes information about accessing the <u>GRB Platform</u>, which provides calculators

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for computing estimated retirement benefits. We strongly encourage employees to use the retirement calculators in the <u>GRB Platform</u> to obtain initial annuity estimates and to request an official annuity computation. You may also contact your SPO (listed below) with questions.

SERVICING PERSONNEL OFFICES

	^DCHR OPE Retirement
eadquarters	410-965-4522
Office of Control Operations	^DCHR OOHRS OCO EBPB
Office of Central Operations	410-966-9726
Office of Hearings Operations (HQ)	^HQ-FC GRB Requests
nce of fleatings Operations (FQ)	703-605-8440
Atlanta Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS ATL Benefits</u>
Atlanta Negion	404-562-1188
Birmingham Program Service Center	<u>^DCHR OOHRS ATL Benefits</u>
and Teleservice Center	205-801-1417
Boston Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS NY BOS SPO</u>
Boston Region	212-264-4075
Chicago Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS CHI HRPB</u>
Dallas Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS DA</u>
Danas Region	214-767-4331
Denver Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS SEA BEST</u>
Kansas City Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS KC</u>
Transus Orly Region	816-936-5840
New York Region	^DCHR OOHRS NY BOS SPO
New Tork Region	212-264-4075
Philadelphia Region	^DCHR OOHRS PHI Pay Bene
- I madoipina region	215-597-4937
	<u>^DCHR OOHRS SF Staffing and Benefits</u>
San Francisco Region	<u>Team</u>
	510-970-2770
Seattle Region	<u>^DCHR OOHRS SEA BEST</u>
Wilkes-Barre Direct Operations Center	<u>^DCHR OOHRS OCO EBPB</u>
Times Dario Briott operations defiter	570-831-1510

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Exhibit B

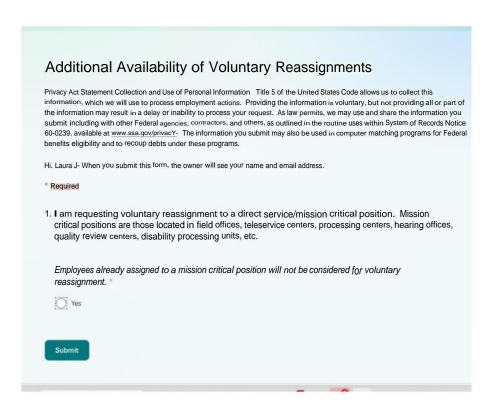
From: Mitchell, Laura J. < @ssa.gov>	
Sent: Friday, April 4, 2025 3:34 PM	
To:	
Cc:	
Subject: on break FW: Empowering You to Define How We Serve - Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments - A	ction NIT 4/7/25

Subject: on break FW: Empowering You to Define How We Serve – Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments - Action NLI 4/7/25

Hello All,

I copied and pasted the information shown in the link for the additional availability of voluntary reassignments, And the 3-Month plan, and just in case you could not open the link.

Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments





Social Security Administration — 3-Month Action Plan

We will focus on core responsibilities and data-driven outcomes to effectively administer Old Age, Survivors, Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income.

KEY THEMES: Customer Service // Fraud & Waste // Workforce

March 2025

Customer Service

- Publish N8NN Realtime Public Metrics
- Release component public videos
- Make payments under the Social Security Fairness Act

Fraud & Waste

- · Terminate non-essential contracts
- Initiate resumption of the Treasury Offset Program
- Resume full withholding rate for overpaid Social Security beneficiaries
- Implement positive ID check and enhanced direct deposit processing

Workforce

- Upsize direct service roles and downsize non-direct service
- Set goal of 50,000 employees by 10/1/25 via voluntary separations
- Return employees to office based on operational business needs

APRIL 2025

Customer Service

- Establish N8NN surge capacity, enhance interactive voice response, expand AWS to 10 new areas
- Release Agency core training videos on YouTube
- Improve electronic Consent Based SSN Verification uptake
- Explore digital SSN card alternative

Fraud & Waste

- Improve and expand data exchanges with other agencies to fight fraud
- Execute AVS bad bank check for internet, N8NN, and field office
- Implement the Payroll Information Exchange

Workforce

- Reassign volunteers from non-direct to direct service
- Ensure compliance with mandatory financial filings for employees

MAY 2025

Customer Service

- Modernize field office telephone systems and add AWS to 10 more areas
- Improve Disability Determination Services performance and productivity
- Leverage AI for online forms and electronic signature
- Develop self-service scheduling for Post Entitlement appointments

Fraud & Waste

- Focus information technology (IT) contracts on mission-critical work
- Explore opportunities to streamline IT contracting

Workforce

- Augment administrative/technical writing work with artificial intelligence
- Expand the Technician Experience
 Dashboard to reduce reliance on legacy IT
- Implement National Litigation Blanket Purchase Agreement

An organization can only complete a handful of activities at any given time. In the past, we have 'spread the peanut butter too thin', focusing on everything, everywhere, all at once. We will provide better service for all Americans.

We will set achievable goals. We will meet those goals.

From: ^Human Resources Internal Communications <

Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 5:30 AM

Subject: Empowering You to Define How We Serve – Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments - Action NLT 4/7/25

Message to All SSA Employees

Subject: Empowering You to Define How We Serve – Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments - Action NLT 4/7/25

Supervisors will ensure that all employees under their supervision, including those on extended leave, receive this information.

The Acting Commissioner released <u>SSA's 3-Month Action Plan</u>, which emphasizes optimizing and empowering our workforce to meet our most critical mission need: serving the public. As part of that plan, we offered all employees a voluntary reassignment opportunity to direct service/mission critical roles. More than <u>1,000 of your colleagues have already stepped up to support our mission – but we need more of you to join them</u>.

As we wrap up the first phase of our workforce optimization effort, which included the deferred resignation program (DRP), voluntary separation incentive payment (VSIP) program, voluntary reassignments, and voluntary early retirement (VERA), on ongoing effort, we are moving forward with additional, significant organizational changes. We are proceeding with plans that may include abolishment of organizations and positions, directed reassignments, and reductions in force (RIF). The agency may direct reassignments for employees in non-mission critical positions to mission critical direct service positions (e.g., field offices, teleservice centers, processing centers, hearing offices, quality review centers, disability processing units). We are offering you a **final** opportunity to voluntarily request reassignment to a direct service/mission critical role before we make further organizational changes.

VOLUNTARY REASSIGNMENTS

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To volunteer for reassignment, please sign up using the following link no later than 12:00PM EDT on Monday, April 7, 2025.

Additional Availability of Voluntary Reassignments

If you previously volunteered but declined or did not respond to the reassignment offer, you will be considered again for the same position, subject to availability.

Please review the attached updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for more guidance. This voluntary reassignment option is a critical opportunity to shape how we deliver essential services and to proactively manage your own career path during this period of organizational change.

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Exhibit C

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From: ^Human Resources Internal Communications <

@ssa.gov>

Sent: Monday, April 21, 2025 1:48 PM

Subject: Deferred Retirement/Resignation Program - Second Chance - Open Until April 25 at Noon

A Message to All SSA Employees

Subject: Deferred Retirement/Resignation Program – Second Chance - Open Until April 25 at Noon

On January 28, 2025, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management sent an email to federal employees presenting a deferred resignation offer. That offer closed February 12, 2025.

We are presenting another opportunity for HQ employees in a non-mission critical position to voluntarily separate by way of deferred retirement or resignation through the Deferred Retirement/Resignation Program – Second Chance (DRP2). Only Headquarters employees in a non-mission critical position are eligible for DRP2. If you've agreed to a voluntary reassignment offer to a mission critical position, you are ineligible for DRP2. Employees participating in DRP2 will begin paid administrative leave on May 5, 2025, and must separate from the agency by September 30, 2025.

How to Apply

To be considered for DRP2, you must complete and submit the electronic sign-up form **by Friday, April 25, 2025 at Noon EDT**.

Sign Up Here: Deferred Retirement/Resignation Program – Second Chance

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The Office of Human Resources will review submissions and determine eligibility. If you are found eligible, you will receive a DRP2 agreement that must be signed and submitted **by April 28, 2025 at 5 PM EDT**.

Key Benefits of DRP 2

- Paid administrative leave beginning on May 5, 2025.
- Continued government pay and benefits through September 30, 2025, without any expectation of performing work beyond May 5, 2005.
- Assurance of exemption from any future agency reductions-in-force (RIF).

Please visit https://www.opm.gov/fork for additional information. Although OPM's DRP is closed, the information in the Original Email to Employees and Frequently Asked Questions may be helpful. Employees participating in DRP2 may not extend their separation date beyond September 30, 2025.